

RORSCHACH PATTERNS UNDER HYPNOSIS*

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IN THE modern literature on hypnosis little is said regarding the changes in personality which occur during the hypnotic trance. Most experimentation concerns itself with the problems of the differentiae between hypnosis and sleep, the depth of hypnosis, etc. Many demonstrations have been offered to show how an otherwise timid, bashful individual will perform quite boldly under the hypnotic trance. Some stutterers can speak normally under hypnosis. Neuroses have been developed in the hypnotic condition. These demonstrations raise questions which are pertinent to the practice of mental hygiene. How fundamental are the personality changes which occur under hypnosis? Are they merely superficial alterations in expressive behavior—the result of temporarily induced *Aufgaben*? Or are they vitally related to the personality structure of the individual?

In this preliminary study, an attempt was made to throw some light on these questions. The Rorschach Inkblot Test was used as the instrument for measuring personality. The writer recognizes that this test has limitations but prefers it to the traditional inventory-type test. The simple stimulus-response principle, upon which the questionnaire type of personality test is based, is inadequate as an approach to the study of personality. It fails to show the selective factors involved in spontaneous or quasi-spontaneous behavior. The Rorschach Test, on the other hand, encourages spontaneous or quasi-spontaneous behavior from which the influence of selective factors may be interpreted.

Procedure: From a group of volunteers, one subject was selected. Out of several classes in elementary psychology this student had a score of 20, the ceiling of the scale established by Friedlander and Sarbin.¹ The standard method of trance induction given by the same authors was used. The experiment was carried on during the afternoon of five consecutive days.

On the first day the subject was hypnotized to determine the depth of hypnosis.

On the second day the subject was hypnotized and given the following suggestion: "You are no longer Miss K. You are now Madame Curie, the famous French scientist. You are now Madame Curie, the famous French scientist." The subject was then led to another part of the room where she was given the Rorschach Inkblots in the manner described by Beck.² Amnesia was induced following the administration of the test, after which the subject was awakened.

On the third day the subject was hypnotized and given the following suggestion: "You are no longer Miss K. You are now Mae West, the famous actress. You are now Mae West, the famous actress." The same procedure was followed as on the second day.

* The experimental work for this paper was done at Ohio State University during the spring of 1938, when the author was a University Fellow in Psychology.

¹ Friedlander, J. W., and T. R. Sarbin. *The Depth of Hypnosis*. *J. of Abn. and Soc. Psychol.* Vol. 33: 4, pp. 453-475, 1938.

² Beck, Samuel J. *Introduction to the Rorschach Method, A Manual of Personality Study*. Monograph No. 1 of the American Orthopsychiatric Association. 1937.

On the fourth day the subject was hypnotized and given the blots to interpret without further suggestion. Amnesia was induced after the administration of the blots.

On the fifth day the subject was given the Inkblots in the normal way. This served as the control.

Values of Rorschach Factors in Three Hypnotic Conditions and in the Normal Waking State*

Session	R	W	D	Dr	Ds	Drs	Z	M	C	F	C	F+	F-	%F+	%A	P failure	M/C	W/D
2—Hypnotized as Curie	40	21	15	3	1	0	54.5	4	0	1	18	12	60	17	1	2	4/0.5	21/15
3—Hypnotized as West	33	19	12	1	0	1	63.5	2	0	0	18	14	55	12	1	3	2/0	19/12
4—Hypnotized as Self	35	14	15	2	1	2	40	0	2	0	11	18	37	20	0	3	0/3	14/15
5—Waking State (Control)	39	11	24	3	1	0	35	5	1	0	22	11	66	54	5	1	5/1.5	11/24

* Scoring according to directions and tables in Beck, S. J., *op. cit.*

Discussion: The table shows several differentiating factors in the psychograms. In all cases the values in each of the first three rows are to be compared with the values in the fourth row. It will be seen that some of these factors are non-differentiating, such as Dr, Ds, R, etc. Others, such as per cent A, P, P failure, Z, W, D, and W/D, may be interpreted as differentiating.

Most of the differentiating scores can be explained in terms of the Aufgabe which the subject imposed on herself following the suggestion. The Aufgabe serves as a selective factor so that when a blot is perceived, the subject "looks for something." This is most clearly shown in the content of the responses. In the psychogram in which the hypnotized subject was told that she was Madame Curie (she was not told to interpret the blots as Madame Curie might), 21 out of a total of 40 responses may be classified as "scientific." Metals, bunsen burners, litmus papers, thermometers, test tubes, biological experiments, accounted for more than half of the responses. She introcepted the suggestion that she was Madame Curie and, when shown the Inkblots, actively searched for or responded only to forms which could fit into a "scientific" or "chemical" Aufgabe. It is interesting to note that she would not relinquish Plate IX after she had represented Dr 12 as "This is also metal . . . I like it . . . Looks like metal . . . Radium, yes, radium, radium."

In the same way, when she accepted the suggestion that she was Mae West, the Aufgabe was "costume." Twenty-two out of 33 responses (66%) were concerned with gowns, costumes, shoes, hats, wigs, etc. She described Plate IV as Tarzan and refused to relinquish it after she had given a complete description of Tarzan, including his tail.

On the fourth day, when the subject was hypnotized and without further suggested told to interpret the blots, 15 out of 35 responses were associated with

France, French parks, Arc de Triomphe, and French people. Plate X was interpreted entirely as France and French rivers, parks, etc. She spontaneously said, "I like it" twice. A later interview revealed that, although she had never been in France, she was possessed of a vocational fixation—she wanted to become an interpreter in the United States diplomatic service. In this case her own Aufgabe, the vocational fixation, was the selective factor in the interpretation of the blots.

In the control experiment in which the subject interpreted the blots in the normal waking state, only two responses might be classified as the same responses which were given during the hypnotic trance. But *not one* response might be associated with the "scientific" (Madame Curie) Aufgabe, with the "costume" (Mae West) Aufgabe, or with the vocational fixation (France) Aufgabe.

It is thus shown from an analysis of the content of the responses that interest patterns (the vocational fixation) and Aufgaben may serve as motivational systems under hypnosis. Further analysis of the psychograms shows that W/D is significant in differentiation. The values are as follows:

Hypnotized—Madame Curie suggestion	21/15 or 1.40
Hypnotized—Mae West suggestion	19/12 or 1.58
Hypnotized—no suggestion	14/15 or .93
Waking state—no suggestion	11/24 or .46

In the responses when the "scientific" or "costume" Aufgaben were dominant, a clear predominance of W/D responses is shown. When hypnotized, but without an externally imposed Aufgabe, the W and D responses were nearly the same, but in the normal state, there were more than twice as many D responses as W responses. During the hypnotic periods, when a definite determining tendency was at work, the blot was more often organized into a unitary whole. In the control experiment, when the subject had a wider latitude, the discrete portions remained unorganized. The method of approach bears this out. In the experimental periods when the subject was hypnotized, the order of approach was regular W/D. In the control experiment the order was rather irregular.

Beck's Z, which is a function of W and D and is an expression of "organizing energy," seems also to be a differentiating factor. The values are as follows:

Hypnotized—Madame Curie suggestion	54.5
Hypnotized—Mae West suggestion	63.5
Hypnotized—no suggestion	40.0
Waking state—no suggestion	35.0

These data may be interpreted in much the same way as the W/D values. The externally imposed Aufgaben circumscribed the response patterns to a greater extent than the self-imposed Aufgabe.

The per cent of animal responses is significant. In the normal waking state, 54 per cent of the responses had to do with animal forms. In the externally imposed Aufgaben, the per cents are 17 and 12, while for the self-imposed suggestion, 20 per cent of the responses are concerned with animals. It seems apparent that this variable can also be related to the fact that in three of the cases the

subject actively searched for definite forms to interpret, while in the fourth her behavior was less selective, with the resulting animal stereotypy.

Of the 39 responses made in the normal waking state, five were classified as Popular. Only two responses in the other three psychograms could be interpreted as Popular. The P failure response, 2, 3, and 3 in the hypnotized state, emphasized even more the influence of the selective factors.

With regard to the *Erlebnistypus*, three of the ratios show more movement than color. The fourth, obtained from the psychogram when the subject was hypnotized and given no further suggestion, shows a higher proportion of C. The significance is not clear. The diagnosis which was made from the *Erlebnistypus* in the normal waking state was verified by a clinical psychologist who had been observing this student.

Summary: Recognizing that generalizations should not be drawn from a single case, this brief experiment suggests that both the Rorschach test and hypnosis can be used as tools in personality diagnosis. It illustrates that *Aufgaben* are selective factors in behavior which cannot always be identified in the normal waking state. In this study we have shown the influence of two externally imposed *Aufgaben* and one self-imposed *Aufgabe*.³ The former appear to be transitory and reflect the conceptions that the subject previously had. The latter, however, seems to be more dynamic.

It is apparent that these tools, the Rorschach test and hypnosis, can be used to advantage in the study of personality. While no startling conclusions can be drawn from this preliminary investigation, a methodological approach is indicated.

³ The writer is aware that he is making an artificial distinction between externally- and self-imposed factors. This is a literary rather than a psychological distinction. The meaning is quite clear that the externally imposed *Aufgaben* are immediate, whereas the self-imposed *Aufgabe* is less recent and probably has a greater valence.

“The Greek Fathers thought that, when there was a *justa causa*, an untruth need not be a lie.”—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

Men are not influenced by things but by their thoughts about things.”—EPICTETUS.